Job mobility still at 10-year high

Media Release

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Source: Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia, February 2023

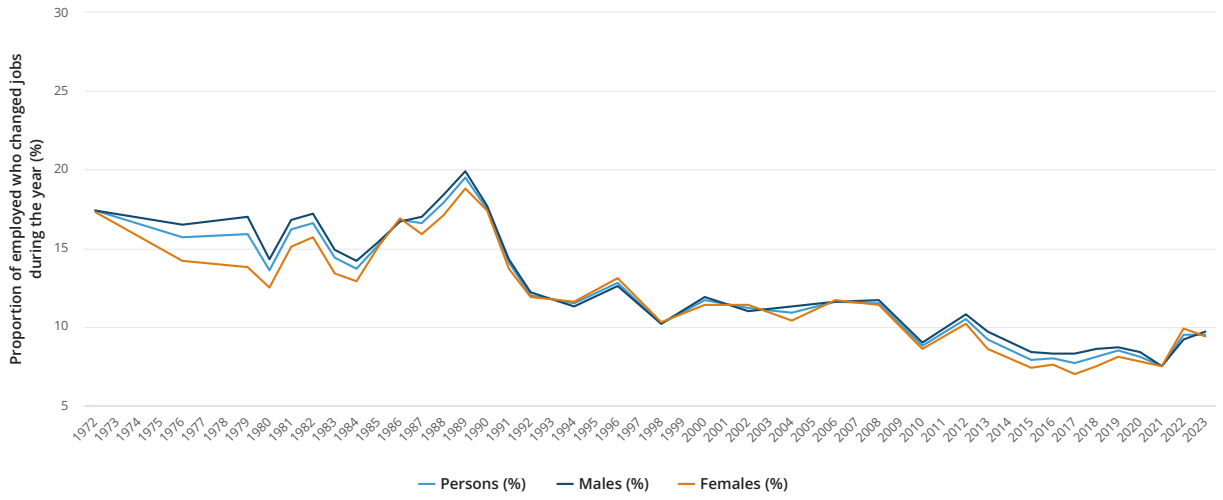
Job mobility remained at 9.5 per cent for a second year in a row, the highest rate in a decade, according to annual statistics released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Job mobility remains at its highest rate since 2012

Bjorn Jarvis, ABS head of labour statistics, said: “In the 12 months to February 2023, 1.3 million or 9.5 per cent of employed people changed their employer or business. This was the same as the year ending February 2022, meaning job mobility remained at its highest rate in a decade.

“Job mobility in Australia has generally been trending down for decades and reached a record low of 7.5 per cent during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the 2023 figure might be higher, and is in fact the highest it’s been since the early 2010s, it’s still relatively low compared to earlier decades.”

Job mobility rate by sex



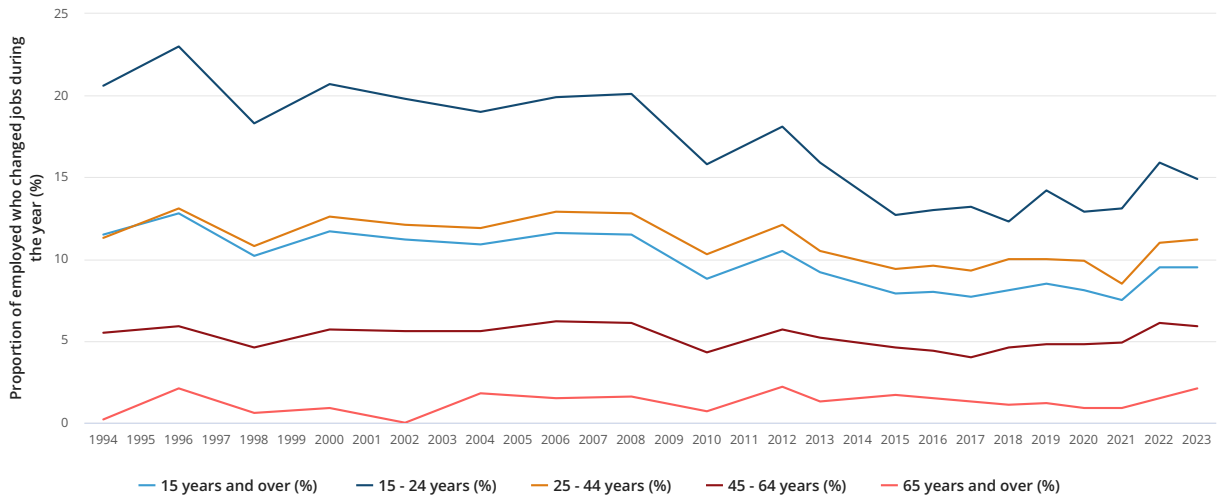
Note: Data for 2015 to 2023 are available from Table 01 of Job Mobility (/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2023#data-downloads) . Pre-2015 historical data can be found in the 2018 release of Participation, Job Search and Mobility (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0Main+Features1February%202018?OpenDocument) publication.

The job mobility rate remained high for both men and women in the year ending February 2023, with job mobility higher for men (9.7 per cent) than women (9.4 per cent).

Younger workers are generally more mobile than older workers, with 14.9 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 years changing jobs. This was followed by 11.2 per cent of 25 to 44 year olds, and 5.9 per cent of 45 to 64 year olds.

Prior to the last two years, job mobility has generally been trending down for younger workers.

Job mobility rate by age group



Job mobility remained high in all occupation groups, with four out of eight major groups seeing more increases over the last year. These were led by Labourers (+1.6 percentage points), followed by Machinery operators and drivers (+1.2 percentage points), and Sales workers (+0.8 percentage points).

Most industries saw a rise in job mobility, with the largest increases seen in Electricity, gas, water and waste services (+4.2 percentage points), followed by Transport, postal and warehousing (+3.4 percentage points), and Rental, hiring and real estate services (+2.9 percentage points).

“People were more likely to change their industry, at 58 per cent, than their occupation, which was 44 per cent, in the year ending in February 2023,” Mr Jarvis said.

Of the people that changed jobs, most went to Health care and social assistance (13.3 per cent), followed by Construction (10.4 per cent), and Professional scientific and technical services (10.3 per cent).

"Over the year, 37 per cent of people changed to a job with the same usual hours, while 33 per cent changed to a job with more hours, and only 30 per cent changed to a job with fewer hours," Mr Jarvis said.

Potential workers: unemployed and those not in the labour force

In February 2023, there were 1.8 million people who were not working but wanted to work (around 510,000 unemployed people and 1.3 million people not in the labour force).

Around 1.0 million people were available to start work straight away and an additional 470,000 were available to start within four weeks, but not immediately.

There were 770,000 people in February 2023 who wanted to work, were available to start within four weeks, but did not actively look for work.

The main reasons they did not look for work were because they were Attending an education institution (165,000 people), Caring for children (130,000 people), and Discouraged job seekers (87,000 people). The number of Discouraged job seekers dropped slightly from 89,000 in February 2022.

Of the 510,000 people who were unemployed in February 2023, 82 per cent reported having difficulty finding work, down from 84 per cent in February 2022.

The main difficulties reported by those unemployed were Own health or disability (11.8 per cent), Too many applicants for available jobs (11.4 per cent), and Insufficient work experience (8.7 per cent).

Media notes

- Job mobility (or job churn) refers to employed people changing their employer or business. The period in focus for this survey is the previous 12 months.
- Potential workers refers to a broad group of people in the usually resident civilian population aged 15 years and over who want to work and may be active and/or available within the labour market in the short to medium term. It includes unemployed people (who are active and available labour supply in the survey reference week) and other groups who are not in the labour force but who want to work (people who aren't immediately available and/or people who aren't actively looking for work).
- Discouraged job seekers are people who did not have a job to go or return to, who wanted to work and were available to start work within the next four weeks but whose main reason for not actively looking for work was that they believed they would not

find a job for any of the following reasons:
    - considered to be too young or too old by employers,
    - believes ill health or disability discourages employers,
    - lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience,
    - difficulties because of language or ethnic background,
    - no jobs in their locality or line of work,
    - no jobs in suitable hours, or
    - no jobs at all.
- See our new Guide to labour statistics (/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics) for more information about the different labour measures, their purpose and how to use them.
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